

COASTAL IMPACT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REQUEST

1. Project Title: Maritime Forest Ridge and Marsh Restoration at Fourchon, LA
2. Entity Nominating Project: Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
3. Contact Information: Kerry St. Pé
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BTNEP
P. O. Box 2663, NSU
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4. Total CIAP Funds Requested: \$675,000
(\$300,000/year for fiscal years FY07 and FY09 each,
\$50,000 for FY 08 and \$25,000 for FY 2010)
5. Infrastructure Funds Proposed: \$0
6. Description and Location of Project:

Since 2000, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program has developed a close partnership with the Greater Lafourche Port Commission in the restoration of a maritime forest ridge and marsh habitats north of Fourchon, LA. This project is a true restoration project in that it does not serve as mitigation for any of the Port's activities. To date, many thousands of cubic yards of earthen material have been pumped to the desired location resulting in an approximately +4 foot platform 400 feet wide by 6,000 feet long. Last year, we funded the shaping of 2,000 feet of that platform to the desired geometry of a +8 foot ridge and +1.6 foot marsh platform. Additionally, we developed a partnership with the NRCS Plant Materials Center and entered into an agreement with them to conduct vegetative trials/demonstration of both herbaceous and woody plants on the 2,000 foot site.





Additionally, BTNEP has developed a volunteer program in order to engage our citizens, both state and national, and provide them a “hands on” opportunity to help in coastal Louisiana’s plight. Within 18 months of initiating this program, we have already brought hundreds of people out to the maritime forest ridge/marsh restoration site to help with vegetative plantings. This has included school children, college youth, corporate volunteers, and concerned citizens from all walks of life, many of which have come from beyond Louisiana’s borders.

FUTURE INTENT

During the Summer of 2006, the Greater Lafourche Port Commission will pump more earthen material to the remaining unshaped 4,000 feet to gain more elevation to meet project specifications. Once the site dries, we will begin the shaping of the remaining 4,000 feet in 2,000 foot increments. The funding requested through the CIAP program will be used to shape the site to the desired ridge/marsh geometry, provide for a part of the vegetative component, and part of the site monitoring. Other funding will come from BTNEP in future workplan years, and through other private/public partners. These funds will help in the restoration of over 60 acres of salt marsh and 60 acres of maritime forest ridge habitat.

Many of the aspects of this project will continue to be evaluated so that lessons learned here can be transferred to other like projects. They include many different vegetative trials, soil monitoring, soil amendments, avian use, subsidence rates, etc. These efforts will result in written reports that can be provided to both the restoration community and private sector alike.

In particular, this project allows for the implementation of several action plans of the BTNEP’s Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan including EM-15 “Protection of Habitat for Migratory and Resident Birds” which calls for “...restoration of important habitats; SR-3 “Citizens Involvement Programs and Activities” which calls for “...development of avenues to help citizens become more knowledgeable and committed to protecting the estuary.” and EG-6 “New Technology Research and Development” which calls for “...research and development of new coastal restoration technologies.”

7. Project Type:

Implementation of a federally approved Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

8. Project Justification:

Many of Louisiana's coastal forests that fringe the distributary ridges, comprise the chenier ridges, or encompass maritime forests of barrier islands have suffered effects from many anthropogenic and natural actions. In particular, dredging of navigation channels to support onshore and offshore oil and gas exploration has caused the direct loss of these habitats as well as coastal wetlands, while the construction of infrastructure to support these activities have had similar consequences. In addition, the increased subsidence rates associated with the sub surface withdrawal of mineral deposits have also taken their toll. And more recently, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have had devastating effects on all coastal habitats.

If Louisiana expects to continue its push for the restoration of its coastal habitats, it is imperative that this project continue. The results from this effort would provide valuable insight to like projects that are now seriously being considered especially since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

To meet the growing demand for both practical applied knowledge and restoration, we propose to continue the ongoing work to not only conduct coastal restoration but to also evaluate a suite of parameters and how they affect plant growth. While these evaluations are not true scientific investigations, they do include an evaluative component of site parameters that help to steer future direction on the next phases of this project.

9. Project Cost Share:

The BTNEP Program has developed past agreements with both government and the private sector to help fund this effort. These partnerships have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars that were used during the first initial 2,000 feet of ridge/marsh restoration. The BTNEP program has allocated some of its own funds toward this effort as well as provided enormous amount of personnel time. The BTNEP program will continue to develop new partnerships as opportunities arise:

BTNEP partners and contributions for the initial 2,000 feet of ridge/marsh restoration include:

LDNR	\$100,000
Gulf of Mexico Program	\$101,700
Gulf of Mexico Foundation	\$90,000
NOAA	\$75,000
Shell	\$100,000
BTNEP	\$30,000 + personnel time
NRCS Plant Material Center	personnel time
Volunteers	\$ thousands in volunteer time
Greater Lafourche Port Commission	\$ hundreds of thousands